



# PROCEEDINGS

OF THE

GENERAL MEETING

OF THE

## ELECTORS of *Westminster*,

In the INTEREST of

Adm. *Vernon* and *Charles Edwin*, Esq;

On Friday the 17th of *July*, 1741.



(Price Six-pence.)



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Adm. Norton and Charles Edwards Esq;

On Friday the 17th of May, 1741.



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AND

*CHARLES EDWIN*, Esq;

On *Friday* the 17th of *July*, 1741,

At the *Crown* and *Anchor* Tavern in  
the *Strand*.

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*Taken in Short Hand by a Person then present.*

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L O N D O N:

Printed for W. WEBB, near *St. Paul's*.  
MDCCXLI.

Ms. A. 9. 2. 20. 71. 73. 47. 48

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OF THE

GENERAL MEETING



ELECTORS  
*By Exchange*  
*W. W. Warren*

IN THE INTEREST OF

Admiral NELSON

AND

*Westminster election*  
CHARLES EDWIN ELLIS

On Friday the 17th of July, 1841,

At the Crown and Anchor Tavern in  
the Strand.

There is shown a list of the names of the

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## ELECTORS of *Westminster*,

In the INTEREST of

*Adm. Vernon and Charles Edwin, Esq;*

On *Friday* the 17th of *July*, 1741.

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Lord *Per*—l in the Chair, as Chair-  
man of that Meeting.

The Sollicitor Mr. *J*—n—s,

*My Lord,*

**I** Am ordered to lay before your  
Lordship, the Report of the  
Committee since the last General  
Meeting, which, with your Lord-  
ship's Permission, I beg Leave to read.

B

Pur-

Pursuant to the Resolutions of the last General Meeting, the Committee directed proper Cases to be laid before Council, for their Opinion how to proceed, in order to punish the Violences committed at the last Election.

By their Advice, an Application hath been made to the Court of *King's-Bench*, for Informations against *John Lever*, High Bailiff, *Arthur Rawlinson*, High Constable, *John Broughton*, a profest Boxer, *Henry House*, and *Francis Burk*, Persons employed by the High Bailiff and High Constable, as their Agents, to hire and procure several Mobbs of dissolute and abandoned Persons, to insult, over-awe, and deter, the free and independent Voters; and to interrupt and prevent the Freedom of Election of this City and Liberty.

My Lord, So unwarrantable and illegal did the Conduct and Proceedings of the High Bailiff, and these Persons, appear to that Court, that a Rule was immediately granted against every one of them, to shew Cause why an Information should not be exhibited against them for this outrageous Procedure.

The

The 16th of last Month was the Day appointed for them to answer the Charge: But so conscious were they, that they could not clear themselves of those Crimes, and willing to put off the Evil Day, they humbly besought and obtained Leave of that Court, to defer shewing Cause till the next Term.

My Lord, The Presence of a regular Body of Military Force, under Arms, drawn up in a martial Order, and attending about the Place of Polling, before, and during the Time of, the Declaration of the Election, in order to back, support, and protect, the arbitrary Design of Power in one Man, to take away and destroy the Liberty of the Subject, or, which is the same Thing, a free Election, its necessary Guardian and Preserver, was a Matter which the Committee maturely considered, and when they reflected, that it was not levelled at a distant little Borough, that could convey no Exemplary Consequence; but, my Lord, at this City of *Westminster*, the very Seat of the Legislature itself; a Place, in consequence of which, the Eyes of the whole Nation are fixed; a Place that spreads Example as far as Law: It appeared to be a Duty incumbent on the

Electors of this City and Liberty, to see that such a manifest Invasion on the Constitution, and so criminal a Stroke on Liberty, should meet with such Censure and Punishment as is adequate to the Nature of so black and destructive a Design, lest, in Consequence of the passive Example of this City, under an Insult so provoking, as well as dangerous to be endured by *Englishmen*, very little, if any, of that laudable and necessary Spirit of Liberty should appear in other Parts of this Kingdom, which hath so bravely and nobly exerted itself in this City and Liberty.

But that this Fact might carry its full Weight and Force, by being ascertained and established by legal Authority, the Committee thought it their Duty to postpone all Proceedings relating thereto, until they discovered in what Manner the Grand Jury of the County would take Notice of this Outrage.

The Committee, my Lord, had the Fruition of their Hopes: For upon the Meeting of the Grand Jury, who appeared to be Gentlemen of great Character and distinguished Reputation, both for Justice and Probity; they presented this Violence in a Manner very becoming  
the



the Nature of it, and which, with your Lordship's Permission, I humbly beg Leave to read.

*Middlesex*, ‘ **W**E the Grand Jury,  
 ‘ of, and for the  
 ‘ County of *Middlesex*, do apprehend,  
 ‘ that among the many Enormities and  
 ‘ Offences committed against the Publick,  
 ‘ none deserves our Observation and  
 ‘ Censure more than those which tend  
 ‘ to the Subversion of the ancient Rights  
 ‘ of the People, to a free Election of  
 ‘ their Representatives in Parliament, in  
 ‘ whom they repose their undoubted Share  
 ‘ in the Government, as well as consti-  
 ‘ tute them Guardians of their Liberties  
 ‘ and Properties ; for we cannot but ap-  
 ‘ prehend, that whenever the People shall  
 ‘ lose the Right of Election, or, which  
 ‘ is the same Thing, the Freedom of  
 ‘ Election, and be obliged to chuse their  
 ‘ Representatives under the Awe, Dread,  
 ‘ or Influence of any other Power, there  
 ‘ must be an End of Parliaments, or at  
 ‘ least the People's Interest and Share  
 ‘ therein.

‘ Wherefore, being sworn to enquire  
 ‘ for our Sovereign Lord the King, and  
 ‘ the Body of this County, **WE ON OUR**  
 ‘ **OATHS PRESENT**, that on Friday the  
 ‘ 8th



' 8th Day of *May* last, while the Elec-  
 ' tion of Members of Parliament for the  
 ' City and Liberty of *Westminster* was  
 ' depending, and before the Declaration  
 ' thereof was made, a Body of Foot  
 ' Guards, or Soldiers, to the Number of  
 ' 50 and upwards, headed by Officers,  
 ' did, in the Afternoon, in a military  
 ' Manner, march up near the Place of  
 ' Polling; which Practice may be of the  
 ' most dangerous Consequence to the  
 ' Liberties of the People, as contrary  
 ' to Law, and a Restraint on the Free-  
 ' dom of Elections.

' We therefore, being affected and  
 ' alarmed with a due Sense and Dread  
 ' of *so daring a Violation and Insult on*  
 ' *our Freedom and Liberties, and the*  
 ' *dangerous Consequence of Military Pow-*  
 ' *er, exercised in Civil Affairs,* do re-  
 ' commend it to this Honourable Court, to  
 ' give such Order and Direction, for pre-  
 ' venting and discouraging the like heinous  
 ' Offence for the future, as they shall  
 ' judge most proper and convenient.

My Lord, In consequence of this lau-  
 dable Presentment, your Committee have  
 ordered an Indictment to be prepared  
 against the Officers who commanded that  
 Party, in order to lay it before the next  
 Grand

Grand Jury, that (to use the Words of the Presentment) *so daring a Violation and Insult on our Freedom and Liberties may not go unpunished.*

The Committee, my Lord, have likewise prepared, by the Advice of Council, a Petition, in the Name of the Burgesses and Inhabitants of the City and Liberty of *Westminster*, to be presented to Parliament, which they have also ordered me to report to your Lordship, for your Approbation, and which, with your Permission, I beg Leave to read.

*To the Honourable the COMMONS  
of Great Britain, in Parliament  
assembled,*

*The Humble PETITION of the several  
Burgesses and Inhabitants of the City  
and Liberty of Westminster, whose  
Names are hereunto subscribed, in  
behalf of themselves, and several  
other Burgesses and Inhabitants of  
the said City and Liberty,*

*Sheweth,*

**T**HAT William, Lord Sundon, of  
the Kingdom of Ireland, Sir  
Charles Wager, Knt. Edward Vernon,  
Esq; Vice-Admiral of the Blue, and  
Charles

‘ *Charles Edwin*, Esq; having on the  
 ‘ 2d Day of *May* been nominated Can-  
 ‘ didates, at the Election of Members to  
 ‘ serve in this present Parliament, for the  
 ‘ City and Liberty of *Westminster*, a  
 ‘ Poll was then demanded, and proceeded  
 ‘ upon, in the Porch of the Parish Church  
 ‘ of *St. Paul Covent-Garden*, within the  
 ‘ said City and Liberty.

‘ That it was previously agreed, be-  
 ‘ tween the said Lord *Sundon*, Sir *Charles*  
 ‘ *Wager*, *Charles Edwin*, Esq; and *John*  
 ‘ *Lever*, Esq; High Bailiff and Return-  
 ‘ ing Officer of the said City and Liber-  
 ‘ ty, that Cheque Books should be kept  
 ‘ on Behalf of the said *Edward Vernon*  
 ‘ and *Charles Edwin*, at the said Elec-  
 ‘ tion, during the Continuance of the  
 ‘ said Poll.

‘ That the said *John Lever* was deter-  
 ‘ mined at all Events, right or wrong,  
 ‘ to return the said Lord *Sundon* and Sir  
 ‘ *Charles Wager*.

‘ That during the first three Days of  
 ‘ taking the Poll, the said *John Lever*  
 ‘ contented himself barely with doing  
 ‘ Injustice, under Colour of exercising his  
 ‘ Judgment; and, under that Disguise,  
 ‘ refused the Votes of several Persons  
 ‘ duly

' duly qualified, and desirous to vote for  
 ' the said *Edward Vernon* and *Charles*  
 ' *Edwin*, and at the same Time admit-  
 ' ted others to poll for the said Lord  
 ' *Sundon* and Sir *Charles Wager*, who  
 ' had no Right of Voting.

' That the said *John Lever*, being  
 ' conscious of his own gross Partiality,  
 ' with a View to suppress the proper Evi-  
 ' dence of it, on *Wednesday* the 16th of  
 ' *May*, 1741, arbitrarily refused the said  
 ' Cheque Books to be continued, on be-  
 ' half of the said *Edward Vernon* and  
 ' *Charles Edwin*; notwithstanding his  
 ' own previous Agreement, and the Con-  
 ' sent of all the Candidates present.

' That the said *John Lever*, not satis-  
 ' fied with Injustice and Partiality only,  
 ' had Recourse to Violence, and, in  
 ' Conjunction with *Arthur Rawlinson*,  
 ' the High Constable of the said City,  
 ' and others, did hire, and pay, a great  
 ' Number of loose and dissolute Persons;  
 ' and furnish them with Clubs, Blud-  
 ' geons, and other offensive Weapons,  
 ' and did direct the Persons so armed to  
 ' attend the Place of Poll, and insult  
 ' the Friends and Voters of the said *Ed-*  
 ' *ward Vernon* and *Charles Edwin*; and  
 ' the said hired Persons accordingly did  
 C attend,



‘ attend, and prevent many legal Voters  
 ‘ from polling at the said Election.

‘ That the said *John Lever*, in the  
 ‘ Wantonness of Power, being deter-  
 ‘ mined at last to make a Return, with-  
 ‘ out so much as observing the Form of  
 ‘ going through the Poll, did, on the 8th  
 ‘ of *May*, 1741, in Defiance of Law and  
 ‘ Justice, without any Notice to the Vo-  
 ‘ ters; without the Consent of the Can-  
 ‘ didates, or any Person in their Behalf,  
 ‘ and contrary to the express Protest of  
 ‘ the said *Charles Edwin* against that  
 ‘ Proceeding, even while several Persons  
 ‘ were then polling, and others demand-  
 ‘ ing to be polled, for the said *Edward*  
 ‘ *Vernon* and *Charles Edwin*, close the  
 ‘ Poll.

‘ That a Body of Soldiers, to the  
 ‘ Number of 50 and upwards, headed by  
 ‘ Officers, marched with Drums beating  
 ‘ to the Place of Polling, and being then  
 ‘ drawn up in a military Manner, the  
 ‘ said *John Lever*, under the Shew of  
 ‘ their Protection, most unjustly declared  
 ‘ the said Lord *Sundon* and Sir *Charles*  
 ‘ *Wager*, duly elected Members for the  
 ‘ said City and Liberty of *Westminster*,  
 ‘ while many hundred legal Voters, de-  
 ‘ sirous to vote, remained unpollled.

‘ That



' That your Petitioners, thus deprived  
 ' by the Injustice and Violence of their  
 ' Returning Officer (emboldened by the  
 ' Intervention of military Power) of the  
 ' Right of being represented in Parlia-  
 ' ment, by Members of their own chu-  
 ' sing; and considering not only the In-  
 ' jury they have themselves received, but  
 ' the fatal Influence which this unparal-  
 ' lelled Attack upon the Privileges of a  
 ' City so immediately under the Eye of  
 ' the Legislature, must have upon all  
 ' other Elections in the united Kingdom,  
 ' think themselves obliged to apply to  
 ' this Honourable HOUSE, for such Re-  
 ' dress to themselves, as may be agree-  
 ' able to the Nature of this Case; and  
 ' for such Punishment to be inflicted on  
 ' the said *John Lever*, and his Accom-  
 ' plices, as the Heinousness of the Of-  
 ' fence, and the Danger of the Example,  
 ' demands.

' Wherefore your Petitioners humbly  
 ' pray this Honourable HOUSE to take  
 ' the Premises into Consideration, and  
 ' to do therein as to this Honourable  
 ' House shall seem meet.'

Upon which it was moved, That the  
 Report should be read again from the

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Chair:

Chair : Which passing in the Affirmative,  
 Lord P——l rose up and read the same,  
 and then address'd himself to the Af-  
 sembly.

‘ *Gentlemen,*

‘ **Y**OU have now received the Report  
 ‘ of the Committee, appointed by  
 ‘ your Authority to conduct the great  
 ‘ Affair of this disputed Election, and I  
 ‘ believe that the Report itself so suffi-  
 ‘ ciently proves, the Diligence and Fide-  
 ‘ lity which they have used, in the Exe-  
 ‘ cution of this important Trust, that it  
 ‘ will be needless for me to say any  
 ‘ Thing with Regard to that Parti-  
 ‘ cular.

‘ But I think it will not be improper  
 ‘ to say something at this Time, with  
 ‘ Regard to the general State of the  
 ‘ Matter; with Regard to your noble  
 ‘ Conduct in it; and with Regard to the  
 ‘ Advantages you have already derived,  
 ‘ and are hereafter likely to derive, from  
 ‘ it; since, from these Reflections, you  
 ‘ cannot fail to receive the greatest En-  
 ‘ couragement, to persevere with Vigour  
 ‘ in Defence of that Cause, which you  
 ‘ have hitherto so gloriously maintained.

‘ And

' And first, I must observe, as to your  
 ' Conduct in this Business, that you can-  
 ' not expect Advantages too great, either  
 ' for yourselves, or for the Nation in  
 ' general, from the Generosity of your  
 ' Resolution, to defend your own Rights  
 ' at your own Expence.—This is the  
 ' only solid Basis upon which you can  
 ' hope to found your Liberties.—It is  
 ' vain to expect an Independent Parlia-  
 ' ment, if you suffer your Members to  
 ' labour under heavy Charges, either in  
 ' carrying on, or in defending their Elec-  
 ' tions; since Reason and Experience both  
 ' concur to teach us, that the Tempta-  
 ' tions to which a broken Fortune is ex-  
 ' posed, are hardly to be resisted by the  
 ' strictest Virtue.—Our Ancestors, sen-  
 ' sible of the Force of this Maxim, paid  
 ' their Members, for their Attendance in  
 ' the House, because the Service, which  
 ' is always burthenfome, was also then  
 ' unprofitable: And though the Case  
 ' may be now unfortunately altered, with  
 ' respect to such Members as will basely  
 ' submit to do the Drudgery of Power,  
 ' yet it continues still the same, and the  
 ' Reason subsists in its full Force, with  
 ' regard to those who act that Part in  
 ' Parliament which this City ought, and  
 ' I am confident always will, expect from  
 ' those

‘ those who have the Honour to be elected by them.

‘ I must observe in the next Place, and congratulate the Assembly upon an Event of infinite Consequence, both to yourselves and to the Publick : I mean the Discovery you have made of what few were sanguine enough to hope, that, even in these degenerate Times, there is yet a sufficient Degree of Virtue left in this City ; still a sufficient Number of Independent Voters, to stemm the strongest Torrent of Power, Influence, and Corruption, that ever yet broke in upon the Constitution of any Country.

‘ In the third Place I am to observe, and likewise to congratulate you, upon the Success you have already had, in your Proceedings at Law, against the Tools and Instruments of Power, who have been employed, as Engines, to overturn the Privileges and Rights of this City.—For though this Matter is not yet brought to a final Determination, as far as the Time could admit, and the Methods of the Courts of Justice would allow, you have received the fullest Assurances of that Issue, which, you



‘ you have so much Right and Reason  
‘ to expect.

‘ Having thus far done your Duty,  
‘ with respect to the Punishment of this  
‘ crying Offence, the only Business now  
‘ remaining on your Hands, is to pro-  
‘ secute the Matter of Redress, and of  
‘ the Restitution of your Rights of Elec-  
‘ tion, without which I may venture to  
‘ say, you do not deserve the Name of  
‘ *Englishmen*.

‘ But this must be pursued in another  
‘ Manner, and before another Tribunal.—  
‘ By the Nature of our Constitution, the  
‘ Parliament are the sole Judges in Mat-  
‘ ters of Elections.— To them therefore  
‘ we must now make our Address.— And  
‘ the Petition now under your Considera-  
‘ tion, is the necessary and only Means  
‘ to attain that desirable End.

‘ I must therefore earnestly recommend  
‘ it to you, that you forthwith put your  
‘ Hands to it, and that you will promote  
‘ the signing of it by all your Friends  
‘ and Acquaintance. For the Facts con-  
‘ tain’d in it are of a most unparallel’d  
‘ Nature, and of a very flagrant Dye.  
‘ Yet they must undoubtedly receive very  
‘ great additional Weight from the Num-  
‘ ber



ber of your Subscriptions to it, which will carry upon the very Face of the Petition itself, the most glaring Evidence of the Falsity and Injustice of the late Return.—And as the Condition of Affairs abroad renders it uncertain how soon the Parliament may meet, I hope that Gentlemen will use their utmost Diligence and Expedition in it, since it must prove of the last ill Consequence, if this Affair should not be brought to Maturity before that Time.

I cannot conclude, without observing farther (and I do it with great Joy) how certain you are, not only to recover, but to maintain your Rights and Privileges to all future Ages, if you act with that Zeal and Vigour which becomes you, and which you have hitherto shewn.—The Example of the City of *London*, which from its close Connexion with you must be obvious to you all, sufficiently demonstrates what may be done by a steady Perseverance, a wise, generous, and disinterested Conduct in Elections.—By these Measures, that great City is now emancipated from that Yoke, under which you have groaned so long; and may now bid Defiance to all the Arts and Malice, either  
of

' of the secret or open Enemies of the  
 ' Constitution: Yet that City, rightly  
 ' consider'd, appears much more liable to  
 ' Influence than this whose Rights we  
 ' now defend; many Publick Offices,  
 ' Publick Companies, and the Collection  
 ' of that vast part of the Revenue which  
 ' arises from their extensive Commerce,  
 ' all centring in the very Heart of that  
 ' Metropolis.

' The Dependence of the City of *West-*  
 ' *minster* on the other hand, is rather in  
 ' Idea than reality; the Trade of this  
 ' City is far less under the Lash of Pow-  
 ' er than that of *London*: And it may  
 ' well admit a Question (which possibly  
 ' some here present are but too well able  
 ' to answer) whether so many have been  
 ' raised as ruined by their Dealings with  
 ' those who on Account of those very  
 ' Dealings insolently pretend to command  
 ' your Votes.—By the pursuit therefore  
 ' of the same generous Measures, you  
 ' may most assuredly promise yourselves  
 ' the same Successes, and raise by the  
 ' joint Example of these Two Great Ci-  
 ' ties, a Spirit of Independency, which  
 ' will diffuse itself thro' the whole Ex-  
 ' tent of this united Kingdom.'

D

Moved

Moved that the Report be confirmed.

Moved that the Committee may have Leave to sit again.—Both which passing in the Affirmative;

Moved that the Petition be immediately signed.

Then my Lord *George* rose up, and address'd himself to the Chair.

*My Lord,*

*I* T is highly necessary that this Assembly should be apprized of the Distinctions made in Parliament upon Applications of this Nature, before they proceed to sign, to prevent our losing the Assistance of any of our Friends, whose honest and warm Zeal to sign the Petition, may be of greater Service in the Prosecution of this Business in another Shape, I mean, as Evidences.

And *first*, It is no way needful that any Member of the House of Commons should sign the Petition; it being a Rule of that House, as well as a Maxim in Law, that Judges may not be

be Evidences in the Cause where they  
fit in Judgment. And,

*Secondly*, It is improper that any Persons, who, by virtue of any Judicial, Ministerial, or Executive Office, assisted, or were present at the late Election, should sign; for thereby they become Parties; and by the same Parity of Reason that Judges may not be Witnesses, so neither ought Parties in Interest to act in that Capacity; nor do I apprehend that they ever are admitted, but upon Matters of the greatest Difficulty, and where better Evidence cannot be had.

My Lord, I believe we all may rest pretty well satisfied, that no Methods will be wanting to invalidate the Testimony of every Person who shall appear in Defence of this Cause, for many Reasons which I forbear at present to mention.

Therefore, my Lord, I think it unnecessary for me to sign this Petition; tho' I hope it will not be doubted, but that I am as heartily attached, and wish your Success as sincerely, as the most active Gentleman here present.

Moved



Moved that the Petition be forthwith signed.—Which was signed accordingly; first by Lord *Per—l*, and followed by all the Assembly then present.

Moved that the Petition be left at some publick Place in every Parish of this City and Liberty, whereby the Independent Electors, now absent, may have Access to subscribe the same.—Resolved in the Affirmative.



**F I N I S.**

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